



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE



MEDIA RELEASE

NSW RFS declares early start to bush fire season in additional LGAs

29 August 2014

The NSW Rural Fire Service (NSW RFS) has declared a number of Local Government Areas (LGAs) across the State will begin their bush fire season one month early, due to forecast dry conditions.

After careful consideration and assessment of current and forecast conditions, the Bush Fire Danger Period (BFDP) will commence in 23 LGAs on 1 September, 2014.

The LGAs commencing the BFDP on 1 September are:

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|------------------|--------------------|----------------|------------------|
| ➤ Bega Valley | ➤ Fairfield | ➤ Muswellbrook | ➤ Tamworth |
| ➤ Blacktown | ➤ Gunnedah | ➤ Penrith | ➤ Upper Hunter |
| ➤ Camden | ➤ Hawkesbury | ➤ Shellharbour | ➤ Wingecarribbee |
| ➤ Campbelltown | ➤ Kiama | ➤ Shoalhaven | ➤ Wollondilly |
| ➤ Blue Mountains | ➤ Liverpool | ➤ Singleton | ➤ Wollongong. |
| ➤ Eurobodalla | ➤ Liverpool Plains | ➤ Sutherland | |

Twenty two LGAs in the State's north east commenced the BFDP on 1 August, 2014.

As of 1 September, the BFDP will be in effect for a total of **55 LGAs** across NSW. The full list of LGAs is available at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/BFDP

The Bureau of Meteorology has advised the recent rain will only provide a temporary reprieve to the prevailing dry conditions across the State.

NSW RFS Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said the weather outlook through to November indicates drier than average conditions across central and southern NSW and warmer than normal temperatures for all but the northwest areas of the State.

"Whilst the recent heavy rain across the State has provided firefighters with a welcome reprieve from fighting bush fires, the Bureau of Meteorology is forecasting below average rainfall for September," Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

"In fact, despite the downpours which have occurred during the past fortnight, a large area of NSW has still only received 60 per cent or less of average rainfall since 1 January.

"The Bureau of Meteorology also advises an El Nino event may influence the bush fire season, producing hotter and drier conditions."



For more information contact the State Duty Media Officer on 02 9898 1855
For current incidents or major fire updates visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Commissioner Fitzsimmons warned the community against allowing the recent rain to make them complacent to bush fire danger.

“Let’s not forget that at the beginning of August, volunteers were fighting more than 90 fires simultaneously, including those which destroyed five homes in the Clarence Valley and Kempsey,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“All it will take is a few weeks of warm weather and we will again be contending with dry landscapes.”

During the BFDP, landowners and managers must obtain a free permit from their local NSW RFS Fire Control Centre before conducting hazard reduction burns.

Commissioner Fitzsimmons said anyone planning to conduct a private burn should contact their local Fire Control Centre first, as permits may be suspended at short notice due to weather conditions.

“In addition, people living in or around bush or grass land areas should download a Bush Fire Survival Plan from the NSW RFS website and fill it in, as well as having a discussion with their family about what they will do in the event of a fire,” Commissioner Fitzsimmons said.

“People should also be preparing their properties, which means clearing gutters, maintaining gardens and checking equipment such as hoses, pumps and generators.”

The statutory BFDP for NSW begins on 1 October 2014 and ends on 31 March 2015.

